

COMMITTEE ON LANDS AND BUILDINGS

February 6, 2001

4:30 PM

Chairman Cashin called the meeting to order.

The Clerk called the roll.

Present: Aldermen Cashin, Gatsas, Levasseur, Shea, Thibault (late)

Messrs: R. MacKenzie, S. Tellier, J. Porter

Chairman Cashin stated we will start with Item 4 and hold Item 3 until Alderman Thibault gets here.

Communication from Richard Allard opposing any development of Hackett Hill.

Chairman Cashin stated I have a conflict of interest with Hackett Hill so I am not going to vote on it.

Alderman Levasseur moved to receive and file this item.

Chairman Cashin asked is anyone familiar with this letter. Maybe we want to refer it to the Planning Department.

Alderman Shea moved to refer this item to the Planning Department. Alderman Levasseur duly seconded the motion. Chairman Cashin called for a vote. There being none opposed, the motion carried.

Chairman Cashin addressed Item 5 of the agenda:

Communication from Public Service of New Hampshire requesting the City execute a Quitclaim Deed relating to the March Avenue Discontinuance.

Mr. MacKenzie stated I am familiar with this particular issue. This is a piece of property adjacent to the property on March Avenue. Normally a right-of-way that has a roadway on it is not a fee simple ownership in most parts of the City. So, when a road is discontinued, that land reverts to the adjacent owners. This

particular case, the old March Avenue that runs in front of the Public Service Company land was different. Actually, the City itself owns the land underneath the right-of-way so in front of the Public Service Company parcel there is a piece of property that is now owned by the City. They have been requesting as part of their rezoning and part of the offer that they made in terms of traffic improvement, they are requesting that the City in turn deed over this particular parcel to them.

Chairman Cashin asked hasn't that rezoning request been held up.

Mr. MacKenzie answered yes. The rezoning request is continuing on by itself. It is not part of the overall zoning package right now.

Deputy Clerk Johnson noted it is tabled in the Committee on Bills on Second Reading.

Chairman Cashin asked couldn't we refer this Quitclaim Deed to Bills on Second Reading and let it go along with the whole package. Does that make sense?

Alderman Gatsas asked where is the piece that we are talking about in this letter.

Mr. MacKenzie asked is there a map with the letter. I haven't looked at this particular item. I happen to be familiar with that area.

Alderman Levasseur answered there is a map.

Mr. MacKenzie pointed out the area that is being discussed.

Alderman Gatsas stated I think that obviously an acre and a half down in that zone is...have we put a price on it.

Mr. MacKenzie replied no. Normally we would request the Assessors give us an estimated value of the property. I do not know if they have been asked to do so yet.

Chairman Cashin asked Mr. Tellier.

Mr. Tellier answered no.

Chairman Cashin stated what I would like to do is refer this to Bills on Second Reading and also to the Assessor's Office to get an appraisal so that we can get the package together to act on it.

On motion of Alderman Levasseur, duly seconded by Alderman Gatsas, it was voted to refer this item to the Committee on Bills on Second Reading and to the Assessor's Office for an appraisal.

TABLED ITEMS

6. Communication from the Director of Planning regarding the possible land acquisition of a piece of property on the westerly edge of Wolf Park.
(Tabled 11/15/00 pending recommendations from Highway and Assessors.)

On motion of Alderman Levasseur, duly seconded by Alderman Shea, it was voted to remove this item from the table.

Chairman Cashin asked, Mr. MacKenzie, have you seen this letter from the Assessor's Office. I am assuming you have. Mr. Tellier, could you come up to a microphone please?

Mr. MacKenzie answered at this point, Mr. Chairman, we have looked at the property and we believe that given its location it would be a logical inclusion in Wolf Park. It is a location where if it was developed it would be directly adjacent to the ball field and the two would be disruptive of each other. It is a piece of property that if the City could acquire it, it would be a very logical acquisition for Wolf Park. I think the question really boiled down to what as an equitable amount potentially that the City could acquire it for. I know the Assessor has been working on that number.

Mr. Teller stated pursuant to the letter you have in front of you, the effort as made to get everyone together to address several questions. One was legal permissible use, the values therein and the subject parcels required and to find out what the developable opportunities were. In your letter it shows clearly who attended that meeting that had authority to render a final opinion on all of those questions. The bottom line is we got a revised value on the potential value if they were built into duplexes. As we all know, there is a housing shortage. They are zoned for two-family housing. There are five lots there. It would require improvement to the infrastructure, road, water, and sewer so we got everyone together and as you can see in the bottom line values the potential lot values, five of them at \$37,000 each at \$185,000. We got a revised infrastructure improvement from Dennis Ancil in conjunction with Frank Thomas' office of \$154,000. The remaining potential value was \$31,000. There is a substantial amount of outstanding taxes owed on that site as well.

Chairman Cashin asked so you are saying that the five lots for the City of Manchester are worth \$31,000 is that what you are saying.

Mr. Tellier answered that would be the potential remaining value after you take the five lots and what they are potentially valued at in the marketplace, deducting from that what it would take to build the road and the infrastructure to be able to improve the lots. The remaining balance is \$31,000. Now obviously there is still a substantial amount still owed on taxes.

Chairman Cashin asked how much is that.

Mr. Tellier answered I would like to ask the Tax Collector to answer that.

Ms. Porter stated it is \$22,658.54 right now. That is as of today.

Chairman Cashin stated so if we take the taxes away from this what are we talking about, \$10,000.

Mr. Tellier answered that is correct approximately. In speaking with Mark Roy who represents the client and he is here today and did attend the other meeting so he was informed on the same questions that we were trying to ascertain, which were legal permissible use and cost. He does have some additional information, Chairman, that I am sure he would like to share with you, but with everything that we had available...we did do some revisions with the Highway Department on the values. This is the best estimate that we have. Now for the members of the Committee who are not aware, these five sites have been kicking around and revisited countless times for almost 20 years. It is not a new problem. It clearly as Mr. MacKenzie indicated would add a lot of utility to the park and it would be desirable to get it. What we tried to ascertain were the bottom line values that were fair and appropriate and leaving it up to the Committee to decide what they want to do.

Chairman Cashin stated it has been in this Committee since November 15. I want to get it out of this Committee.

Mr. Tellier replied Mr. Roy is here to address the Committee if you would like to find out what his concerns are on behalf of the person holding the deed to that site.

Mr. Roy stated we did have a very extensive meeting, which included the Assessor's Office, Frank Thomas, the Building Department and Joan's Office. There is a substantial tax owed on this property. We have worked very diligently to come up with an accurate value at Alderman Gatsas' request - hard, factual numbers. My client looks at these five lots and it is basically time to do something

with it. It either has to be sold to the developer or it has to be sold to the City. The logical request would be that it becomes Parks & Recreation land. That is what he would prefer. That is what, I think, the City would prefer in looking at these numbers, the five lots at \$37,000 each, originally I had proposed the number \$45,000. In working with the Assessor's Office, we came to an agreement of \$37,000 to represent the lots that are available. The only problem that we have with the cost is in looking at Dennis Anctil's preliminary cost estimate is Alderman Gatsas had requested hard and factual numbers in putting this together as to what it would cost to build a road and put these buildings up if that was the direction that a developer had to go. The only thing we would like to do is take out the 15% contingency fee, which brings the road costs down to \$133,000 and alters that number to \$154,000 by \$20,000 leaving the remaining balance to the owner in the \$51,000 range. Subtracting the back taxes of almost \$23,000 it becomes I believe a fair settlement for the City and also creates land for future Parks & Recreation.

Chairman Cashin asked what is your bottom line.

Mr. Roy answered I have been authorized this evening, if it moves this process along because the owner is as frustrated as you are, Chairman, to accept an offer of \$50,000 to move it to Alderman O'Neil's CIP Committee and work out the issues on how and where the money would come from.

Alderman Shea asked if \$50,000 were given to you, you would then reimburse the City was it owed on the taxes.

Mr. Roy answered absolutely. This process started many years ago when the local attorney received this property. He tried to swap it through the Assessor's Office for different pieces of more developable land that wouldn't impact Parks & Recreation and the neighborhood so dramatically. That process has gone up and down for the past five or six years. The file was put on the bottom of the stack for many years and now it is time to address it.

Alderman Cashin asked what is your bottom line after taxes, \$28,000.

Mr. Roy answered yes. If this Committee agreed to the \$50,000 sales price minus the \$22,658 for taxes, the owner would accept that.

Alderman Shea moved to approve the land acquisition at a cost of \$50,000.

Alderman Levasseur stated, Mark, I have a hard time believing that somebody wants to sell this land for \$28,000. It seems like a good parcel. Why don't you

just go out in the open market and sell it for \$50,000? Is there nobody out there who wants to buy it?

Mr. Roy answered basically in looking at the impact to Parks & Recreation, where this road would go and working through the Solicitor's Office and the land that it sits on, the road would actually go through the clubhouse at Wolf Park.

Alderman Levasseur asked are you saying that you are selling this to the City because you are being nice. Are you doing it for altruistic reasons because you want the City to own it?

Mr. Roy answered the City is the logical owner. This owner for many years has tried to trade it and get it to the City. He wanted to be compensated in other forms of land so that he could then develop that property to its fullest potential. This piece of land, as Alderman Cashin may speak to because he viewed it with me, it should be...it is literally the parking lot of Wolf Park.

Alderman Gatsas asked what was the value the Assessor's put on it.

Mr. Roy answered \$37,000 per site times five or \$185,000.

Alderman Gatsas asked would the owner be interested in making a contribution to the City for a tax contribution of \$185,000.

Mr. Roy answered I can propose that to him. In the past, he has said no to that request.

Alderman Gatsas asked to take a tax deduction of \$185,000.

Mr. Roy answered in the past he has said no to that.

Alderman Lopez asked, Mr. Tellier, why are we using a high number of \$37,000 versus \$30,000. What is a lot going for today?

Mr. Tellier answered the \$30,000 figure initially was with the developer's discount. However, with the lot supply and demand there are fewer and fewer available lots for improvement so there was a valid argument for an increase in the per lot assessment. However, in Mr. Roy proposing what looks at first glance like a reduced value, there are some mitigating circumstances. If you look at the letter, site improvement would require a variance. Now with the shortage in housing would the variance be granted, that is anybody's guess at this time.

Alderman Lopez stated we need housing. I know it is Alderman Cashin's ward over there but the calculation coming up to get \$31,000. Now I have been involved in the process for that particular area as Chairman of the Parks & Recreation Commission for a long time. What I was looking at was taking the \$22,000 and it is up to the Committee, but out of \$31,000. To me that is a fair deal all the way around for everybody. You get to pay the taxes that you owe like I pay my taxes. I don't know...Mr. MacKenzie he is using the figure of 15% that is evaluated on \$154,000. Do you agree with that or should we talk to Frank Thomas?

Mr. MacKenzie replied I would prefer to rely on the Highway Department for those numbers. Generally, they do it quite often and we have found them to be fairly accurate.

Alderman Lopez stated I agree with Alderman Gatsas but I don't think they are going to donate anything. I really believe that when you say in infringes on the ballpark, it is not that much. I guarantee it.

Chairman Cashin stated this has been sitting in this Committee now since November and I would like to get it out of this Committee. Let's send it over to CIP with an understanding that a mutual price has been agreed upon at \$28,700.

Mr. Roy replied I believe in doing the math that it comes out to \$31,441 after the taxes are paid. Also, if it may please Alderman Lopez, I have a copy of Dennis Ancil's estimate showing a very, very good breakdown. Frank Thomas and his department have worked quite diligently on something that hopefully will never be developed.

Chairman Cashin asked Alderman O'Neil as Chairman of the CIP Committee can we refer this there for you to negotiate. I have to get it out of this Committee. It is just going to die here.

Alderman O'Neil replied the CIP Committee would gladly try to resolve this issue.

Alderman Shea asked, Mark, you would agree on \$50,000 and if you were to deduct \$22,658 that wouldn't give you \$31,000. That would only give you \$28,000.

Mr. Roy answered I stand corrected then. The figure of \$50,000 minus whatever is due for taxes at the time of closing. The majority of this money and I believe Joan can attest to this, is interest on taxes going back as far as 1996. This property...originally there was an agreement that it was going to be swapped and then a good land swap couldn't come about so the owner has not paid his taxes. If

it does not make it out of this Committee and through CIP successfully and become City land, it will unfortunately go on the open market and I don't believe that suits anyone.

Chairman Cashin stated the parcel goes through Wolf Park and I believe left field is part of your property and if we don't do something with it, you are going to affect Wolf Park.

Mr. Roy replied using estimates from the Highway Department you would be altering Wolf Park by 50 feet in left field, from the fence of left field through the foul area, which is about 10 feet to a distance into left field.

Alderman Gatsas asked Mr. Roy can you check with your client and see if he is willing to make a contribution for the \$185,000 write-off. That is a pretty generous offer versus \$28,000 in cash. I don't think that anybody on a reasonable basis would look at that and say here is a tax deduction that I can take as a contribution to the City.

Mr. Roy answered I agree, Alderman, but he has been proposed that many times and always turned it down.

Alderman Shea moved to refer this item to the Committee on Community Improvement. Alderman Gatsas duly seconded the motion. Chairman Cashin called for a vote. There being none opposed, the motion carried.

Alderman Levasseur stated first of all he is saying that we are going to build a road or do some development and it is going to go through Wolf Park. Well, there is a process called going through the Planning Department and they are not going to be given the right to be able to build across that. Also, we are in the Land and Buildings Committee to make decisions on whether we should be giving them the money or not. I don't think passing it off to CIP is the right thing to do. We are supposed to make this decision. It is a lands and buildings issue, Mr. Chairman, and we are talking about sending it to CIP and we haven't even decided whether we are going to buy it or not. I think you should at least take a vote on whether we are going to purchase it or not, otherwise they are going to have to come together in CIP, decide a price and then come back here for our approval anyway because they can't sell it without our approval. I don't think you can do that...maybe Carol can tell us do we have to make that decision?

Deputy Clerk Johnson stated the question referring the property here this Committee normally would make a recommendation out to the Board. The full Board is going to have to act before any property could be purchased.

Alderman Levasseur asked but why are we passing it on to CIP, because we can't make a decision.

Chairman Cashin answered because it has been sitting here since November and you guys can't make a decision.

Alderman Levasseur replied well you haven't asked for a motion.

Chairman Cashin responded I have asked for three motions.

Alderman Levasseur moved that we don't purchase the property.

Chairman Cashin stated we have a motion to refer this item to CIP.

8. Communication from M. Jeanne Trott requesting to purchase two (2) parcels of land located at the corner of North Bay and Bennington Streets.
(Tabled 9/18/00 pending information on a possible conservation easement.)

On motion of Alderman Shea, duly seconded by Alderman Levasseur, it was voted to remove this item from the table.

Deputy Solicitor Arnold stated there was some discussion about a conservation easement, which I don't think is feasible because it would essentially be the City giving a conservation easement to itself. As I had discussed with Alderman Cashin and Alderman Wihby some time ago, I did draw up a Resolution for this Committee. I forwarded it to Jeanne Trott who looked at it and made a suggested change, which I agreed to. I have that Resolution here tonight if you would like to view it. Basically, it is a Resolution calling to keep this particular lot in its natural state as it presently exists.

Alderman Gatsas asked, Mr. MacKenzie, have you seen a copy of this.

Mr. MacKenzie answered no.

Alderman Gatsas moved to approve the Resolution. Alderman Levasseur duly seconded the motion.

Alderman Shea asked, Mr. Arnold, are we going to keep this land ourselves.

Deputy Solicitor Arnold answered yes.

Chairman Cashin called for a vote on the motion. There being none opposed, the motion carried.

Chairman Cashin addressed Item 3 of the agenda:

Report of the Committee on Lands and Buildings recommending that Singer Park B, as referenced herein, be chosen as the site for the Senior Center.

Alderman Levasseur stated today I was handed a survey by Commissioner Ira "Jack" Royer who put a survey in certain areas of the City like senior citizen buildings, the West Side Senior Center, the East Side Senior Center and a couple of other locations like the Merrimack Restaurant. I have the copies here. I will put them into the record. There weren't any actual numbers given out. It was just a choice between the two sites that were approved by the Committee. Those being the Singer Park location or the Sears building. The results came out 321 for Singer Park and 16 for the Sears site. I am just going to enter these into the record so that you can have copies made and handed out. It wasn't bias because it didn't have any information attached to it.

Alderman Shea moved to proceed with a freestanding building at the Singer site. Alderman Thibault duly seconded the motion.

Chairman Cashin stated I would like to bring in a building on Maple Street that I feel is conducive to a senior center. I think it should at least be evaluated. The cost of it would be about 1/10 of what you people have been talking about and I think we should look at it. That is the building on Maple Street. I don't have the address but it is the Teamster's Hall and I understand it is going up for sale and I think we should look at that.

Alderman Levasseur stated we spent \$25,000 on a person or REI to go out and do a study for the City. There were 50 sites that were looked at. The two sites came down and there were two sites voted on by this Board. Both are at a stalemate, Mr. Chairman, and I believe that now we are opening it up to another location and I think that the intent was to have a free-standing building and we want to build a first-class site and I don't believe that Maple Street would be a first-class site that the seniors would like to see. I would vote against that motion.

Alderman Shea stated I concur. I think that we have discussed this forever and if we look at every site that could possibly be brought up we could be looking at sites from now until hell freezes over. Basically, we know pretty much what the seniors would like. There have been discussions, as the Chairperson of the Senior Center Committee, I was open and anyone who wanted to come...Alderman Gatsas can say he had an equal voice and Alderman Lopez worked on this also. I say let's get it done. Let's put our focus on where it should be. As far as the cost

is concerned, I think that...we do different projects and we are not overly concerned about how much these projects cost so I would say that this project is less than what we paid for Livingston Park. My focus and my attention and my desire and my wish is that we settle this once and for all and we decide that Singer is the area. Let the Aldermen vote on it and let the Mayor take a stand on this matter and let's get on with it.

Alderman Thibault stated I would like to apologize for being late. The snowstorm that we had last night kept me busy. I would like to say that in looking at the building that you just brought up, Mr. Chairman, it would certainly not be conducive to the people of the West Side. I believe that we are trying to find a location here that would be geographically proper for everyone who lives in the City of Manchester. I believe that there is not a place that is more centrally located than Singer Park. The people only have to cross the river. If we have to furnish canoes, we will furnish canoes. It is right across the river. If you look at the situation, here we are trying to get a group of the elderly people of the City of Manchester in an area that is conducive to all of them. To me, Singer Park is one of the best locations that was ever devised. It is a location that as soon as they cross the bridge they are right there. The West Side, don't forget, is like 38% of the City of Manchester. Isn't it time that we get our voice into this? I would certainly support Singer Park one million percent.

Alderman Lopez stated as you all know I am for Singer Park too. I would like to ask Mr. MacKenzie a few questions. Have you done anything, when the Mayor has given you direction as to the borings and everything else that Alderman O'Neil asked to be done? Has anything been done? Where are we?

Mr. MacKenzie replied after the last full Board action referring it back to Committee, I had some questions as to whether the Board meant for the staff to proceed or not. I did review that with the Mayor. The Mayor seemed to say that we should proceed and the staff has been. We are reviewing utilities. We are reviewing soil borings. I am trying to get a meeting with the Riverfront Park Foundation and the assessed appraisals of the Sears site are also proceeding. The staff is moving forward.

Alderman Lopez responded the boring is the most important area down there. The area where a building would go versus where a parking lot would go is a little different in how you build it. I am sure you are aware of that, but I just wanted to mention it.

Alderman Levasseur stated out of that survey that was taken, 122 of the people who signed it were from the West Side Senior Center. I would like to ask this Board if we can make an amendment to Alderman Cashin's motion that instead of

playing games with numbers as far as the square footage I think that we should settle on 15,000 square feet so that we are comparing apples to apples. I think the number should be 15,000 with the potential for building upwards instead of sideways or outward. I would ask for a second on that motion.

Alderman Shea duly seconded the motion.

Alderman Lopez asked, Mr. MacKenzie, have you done anything on the 16,000 square foot building. Is this going to hurt that because we were talking 16,000 in all of your statistics.

Mr. MacKenzie answered at this point in time I don't think that setting a square footage is going to hurt our review. It might help us pin down a number to finalize things.

Alderman Thibault asked in your findings so far, have you found any problems with Singer Park as far as borings or anything else. I would like to get that question answered because many people have brought this up and I never heard that there were major problems there. Do you know, today, of some major problems at Singer Park that would prohibit us from building a senior center there?

Mr. MacKenzie answered we did track down through the Building Department a copy of soil borings at the location of the stage that the Riverfront Park Foundation is installing. Those borings...I did look at those. There was some concern raised in my mind, but I am not a soil engineer and we would have to have those reviewed. There are some issues that come up in those soil borings. That is maybe 100 feet or so from the location of the proposed building. To be sure, we would still need soil borings at the exact location of the building, but the soil borings I saw did raise some concern.

Alderman Thibault asked could any of these borings that you know of now or potentially will know of prevent us from building a senior center there.

Mr. MacKenzie answered I am not sure if it would prevent it. There are certain soil characteristics that would prevent it. Normally, they would mean either higher costs or extended delays. If you had a large amount of hazardous materials, for example, that would take time and money because you would have to excavate it all out.

Alderman Thibault asked aren't we talking about where we are going to put the senior center having no major problems. Wouldn't it be mostly in the parking area as I understand it? Maybe I am wrong. As I understand, if it is a parking facility,

the conditions are a lot less than they would be if you are going to put a building in the ground there. Is that something that we could work around?

Mr. MacKenzie answered again I am not a soil engineer and would probably defer to an analysis of those soil borings. Right now we do not have borings at the exact location of the building. They are near Singer Park. They did raise some questions because all of this land was filled significantly over the past hundred years and it has been filled with various things. Even the proposed building location is full of unknown characteristics. I can't tell you today if the location where the building is proposed has any serious problems, although the borings I saw nearby raised some questions in my mind.

Alderman Thibault asked how long of a wait would be proper for us to get an exact number of where we are at with that.

Mr. MacKenzie answered the first step is to get approval from the Riverfront Park Foundation to do the borings. I am trying to line up a meeting with their Board to go through the overall proposal and to get permission to do site investigations, including soil borings. Once that is done, I would defer to the Highway Department who would help hire someone to do the soil borings in the appropriate location. I don't think I can give you an exact date.

Alderman Thibault asked how about a timeframe.

Mr. MacKenzie answered if I could meet with the Riverfront Park Foundation in the next two weeks, it might be another four to six weeks after that depending on how the spring conditions are to get someone in there to do a soil boring.

Alderman Thibault stated I think that is a very important thing that we should do before we go anywhere with this. Although I support the Singer Park site, I want to be sure that we are not putting our seniors in some type of jeopardy out there also.

Alderman Shea asked there were problems at the civic center site which were addressed weren't there in terms of hazardous soil and so forth. So, it is a costly process possibly but it isn't an impossible feat to accomplish is it?

Mr. MacKenzie answered in most cases it can be engineered around. It may increase costs and it may increase time. There is a small percentage that could stop the project.

Alderman Shea asked and the stage is going to be constructed, isn't it, at Singer Park even though there are some concerns.

Mr. MacKenzie answered that is correct.

Alderman Gatsas stated I guess I need to be corrected. I believe the full Board sent this down to get the appropriate numbers and review in place. I am getting the minutes because I believe Alderman Levasseur seconded the motion. Can we wait until I get those minutes?

Alderman Levasseur stated what difference does it make. We have made different motions anyway and we are moving along?

Alderman Shea stated I believe I made the motion and the motion was to decide whether we wanted to have a consolidated situation or a self-standing and to separate the two. I don't believe there was a cost analysis involved. I don't think we were looking for the I's to be dotted or the T's to be crossed.

Alderman Gatsas asked isn't the Sears building a freestanding building or did it get connected somewhere.

Mr. MacKenzie answered, as I understood it, the Board directed us to look at a freestanding at Singer and a freestanding at the Sears site.

Alderman Gatsas asked have we got back a report to that effect.

Mr. MacKenzie answered no we have not.

Alderman Gatsas stated well that is the direction that we sent Mr. MacKenzie in at the full Board. Alderman Levasseur, I believe, had some concern about us not comparing apples to apples. One was 18,000 square feet and one was 16,000 square feet or whatever. I think the full Board agreed that we needed to take a look at the numbers apples to apples and how that fell into place. Now, I don't believe that anybody is putting a connecting building there that they weren't in a freestanding building. Maybe what you are saying is that you don't want a freestanding building, you just want the Singer site period. So, if it is more expensive to the taxpayers when we do a consolidation over there, that doesn't have an effect?

Alderman Shea replied we can consolidate departments without buying the Sears building so we could save money in that regard. Anyway I am for a freestanding building.

Chairman Cashin stated I can tell you how this vote is going to go.

Alderman Levasseur stated I would like to try something here and see if we can come to a consensus on this. I don't know what the feeling of the Board is, but there seems to be a big move in the City to consolidate all of this. We both know that if we put this on the Sears site we will get a consolidation and a freestanding building. We are looking at an 18,000 square foot building located on the Sears site. Now, if we could bring it down to 15,000 square feet, we could easily say 15,000 on either site. Why can't we just have the consolidation over on Elm Street with the building there and just take the freestanding building and put it over at Singer Park? That seems to me to be a break in the stalemate. Everybody will get what they want. You will get your building for consolidation and you get your freestanding building at Singer Park. I think it is a cooperative move and we can all move forward on this. If we just say we are going to do a 15,000 square foot stand alone building, what is the difference if we put it on Chestnut Street where you get to look out at Goodwin Funeral Home or you get the building and you put it at Singer Park where the seniors can walk along the Riverwalk and look out on the Merrimack River? I think we will satisfy everybody on the Board if we do this and I think that in the spirit of cooperation we can settle this once and for all. Is that a good idea, Mr. Chairman? What is the difference if we put the freestanding building over on Elm Street?

Chairman Cashin replied first you are saying let's buy the Sears building, right and then let's go ahead and build a free-standing building down at Singer Park. What is the cost? What are we looking at?

Alderman Levasseur asked what would be the difference in the cost if we were to build a 15,000 square foot building at Singer Park or if we were to build it on Chestnut Street. They are both 15,000 square feet and they are both stand-alone buildings.

Chairman Cashin answered when we first talked about Singer Park, and you can correct me if I am wrong, we were going to combine the elderly center in with the departments in one building. That is how we originally started. Is that fair?

Alderman Levasseur replied yes. That was the original idea about a year ago. Not at Singer Park.

Chairman Cashin stated well we were going to combine the City departments and the elderly center in one building. Now we have expanded it to buying the Sears building and putting up a freestanding building so I think we can accept that we have increased the cost. I am just asking what are the numbers.

Alderman Levasseur asked wouldn't that be a good compromise, Mr. Chairman because the consolidation would be taken care of and you would not be taking

away any of the parking spaces there and you are still getting a freestanding building. The freestanding building is just going to a different location. We can break the stalemate right here and right now and we can move forward with this and get on with our lives. We don't have to send it to CIP.

Alderman Shea stated you wanted a cost analysis. At 1415 Elm Street, according to the material here and what Mr. Wallace the architect drew up, to buy the Sears building and to renovate the Sears building for a senior center that is would be approximately \$6 million. This was, from what I can gather here, is about 33,000 square feet and the seniors would be in there. If you were to build a 24,000 square foot building at Singer Park, it would be about \$4.3 million. The second proposition is that if you didn't put the seniors in the Sears building, but you had a separate or a free-standing building you would probably deduct whatever you would have to make for improvements in the Sears building to include the seniors, but you would probably add about whatever the cost is for a 15,000 or 18,000 square foot building, which would be about \$2 or \$3 million. So, the cost would be roughly \$7 or \$8 million. Maybe Alderman Gatsas knows better, but we are talking ballpark figures here. If you reduce the Singer Park site down to 15,000 square feet, then you are probably talking about \$2.8 or \$3 million.

Alderman Levasseur stated it is a compromise.

Chairman Cashin replied I am going to come in with a minority report anyway.

Alderman Levasseur stated you are just going to convolute it more.

Chairman Cashin asked how can you honestly vote for something when you are not even sure what the numbers are. You are talking anywhere between \$4 million and \$7 million. I am coming in with a building that is adequate and the parking is adequate for 10% of what you people are planning to spend – about \$400,000 and you people won't even consider it. How are you going to go to your constituency and explain that?

Alderman Shea answered because they don't want to be in a Teamster's Hall.

Alderman Thibault stated I don't disagree with what you just brought up, Mr. Chairman, but this is something that you just brought up now. I would have no problem looking into that. All I am trying to say is that I have no problem with the Sears site either if, in fact, the City can consolidate their offices there. I am talking location, location, location...

Chairman Cashin interjected you have made your point.

Alderman Thibault replied I don't think I did. I want people to know that the people that live on the West Side are part of this City also and I believe that they should have a right to come to a closer area.

Chairman Cashin responded with no disrespect I have represented the people on the West Side a lot longer than you have. Nobody is more familiar with the West Side than I am and nobody is more familiar with the West Side Center than I am because I built it.

Alderman Thibault replied I was there too, Sir.

Alderman Levasseur stated well 122 of those people voted for Singer Park.

Alderman Vaillancourt stated I kind of like the idea of the spirit of compromise that Alderman Levasseur and Alderman Thibault are going for and if you want to go for location, what if you take the Singer Park location and forget Sears for the other building but if, in fact, the Teamster's Hall is 1/10 as much how about doing the consolidation there. Then, with the money you save there spend a little bit of it on the seniors. I am saying you get the location for the seniors but then you do your consolidation of the departments at the Teamster's Hall.

Alderman Levasseur replied the Teamster's Hall is only like 4,000 square feet.

Chairman Cashin stated it is 7,000.

Alderman Levasseur replied that is not going to consolidate anything.

Alderman Gatsas stated the last I knew I believe there are three bridges that connect the East Side to the West Side. Not only one, Queen City Avenue, but there are three bridges, no four bridges. I believe that if you take a look at proximity from the West Side to anyplace that you are talking about, the two bridges that lead you to the Sears building are certainly a lot shorter than any person who is going to the West Side from anyplace down along Route 3A coming in if you want to talk about proximity. That is not what we should be talking about. What we should be talking about is what the cost to the taxpayers is going to be and a realistic approach to the senior center. We could sit here and say yes Singer Park is a great place. They could do borings or whatever else they want down there and maybe it comes back that we can't build there and that could be a two year wait again for them. So, we are back at square one and we are not looking at it realistically and we haven't even looked at a number yet for where it stands for the taxpayer and what that implication is. I think that is why the full Board sent it back here. There is no question that we are divided on it, but at least let's look at the numbers and see what makes sense for both parties.

Alderman Levasseur stated well Alderman Gatsas is willing to go out and spend \$7.4 million and that is with no renovation, no leases, buyouts.

Alderman Gatsas asked where are you getting those numbers.

Alderman Levasseur answered those numbers are in there. Don't sit here and say you don't know what the prices are.

Alderman Shea stated, as you know I don't want to bring in the fact that we are concerned about the taxpayers when we are doing them no good by using the rooms and meals money for the next 30 years. I don't want to beat a bad horse to death, but let's face it. When we talk about supporting the taxpayers, looking at everything that the taxpayers are supposed to get back for their dollar, let's analyze everything that comes before us, not the things that may have our particular interest at heart. Let's look at all of the issues that come before us. I resent very much anyone saying to me that I don't respect the taxpayers when I am probably the most conservative member of this Board...no I see my Libertarian friend over there. Let's examine everything, not just the fact that we want to help the seniors. Let's be honest about things here.

Chairman Cashin replied for the record, Alderman, I voted against the civic center also.

Alderman O'Neil stated the senior center was sent back here because there was no consensus with the full Board of Aldermen. All I see is no matter what the recommendation out of this Committee back to the full Board that again there will be no consensus by the full Board of Aldermen. It is going to take 10 votes no matter what plan you move forward on. I think the Board has to get creative and if it includes at this point new sites, I think you have to look at them. Alderman Shea, can you tell me when the consultant's study was done? Eighteen months ago maybe?

Alderman Shea replied the consultant submitted the report on August 25, 2000.

Alderman O'Neil responded all I am saying is that things have changed since they did the study. Buildings might be available now that weren't available then and vice versa. Buildings that they thought were available might no longer be available. I just think out of fairness and Alderman Gatsas kind of hit on it, it is going to be another two years before we get a center built. I think you have to look at all alternatives to try to bring closure to this project.

Alderman Gatsas stated I am not opposed to Alderman Levasseur's conclusion. If that is the best deal then fine but let's have somebody run some numbers that make some sense instead of somebody throwing around \$7.4 million. I am saying it is \$6 million. Somebody else is saying \$9 million. Let's get a conclusion of what it costs to build 16,000 square feet with debt service, with the road, with everything else down at Singer Park and bring that back.

Alderman O'Neil stated I am not a member of this Committee but when we got into this discussion at the full Board level, within a week following I sent a letter to five, six or eight department heads or representatives. I only sent it on my behalf but I wanted the Board to know that I sent it because I was looking for some of the information that I think Alderman Gatsas was searching for. I, to date, have not seen a response to that. I just want to let the Committee know that.

Alderman Lopez stated I think Alderman Levasseur made a good point but I want to ask the professional over here. The longer we take to make a decision, Mr. MacKenzie, where does that put you in wasting time. If we were to tell you and make a decision...let's forget about the soil sample and everything. In all of your years of experience if we told you to put that center down there, could you build it at Singer Park?

Mr. MacKenzie replied I guess I would like to see more information first and some of that hinges on interest outside the City, which includes the Riverfront Park Foundation which perhaps has somewhat different views but could be resolved. We have not sat down with the Riverfront Park Foundation Board to get their approval and to get them to allow us to proceed. They do control, through lease, that particular area where the senior center is proposed. I believe that the staff would make a best effort to get the project done at that particular location and we are prepared to do that once the Board makes a decision.

Alderman Lopez stated all we are doing is wasting time by not making a decision.

Mr. MacKenzie replied I would add that there are some time constraints. The Board will be looking at the CIP program in March and that will be a critical time for you, as a Board, to make decisions on priorities for spending. Hopefully, we will try to have a report to you on the senior center on these other issues that are important so that you can consider it in your CIP process.

Alderman Levasseur stated they put a civic center on Elm Street so they could put a senior center down at Singer Park. The Riverfront Park Foundation met with his Committee and said we welcome you with open arms. I have talked to people on the Riverfront Foundation and they said bring it down there.

Chairman Cashin stated I am not sure what the motion is at this point.

Alderman Thibault asked, Mr. MacKenzie, doesn't that come in to what I just asked a few minutes ago as to what is the timeframe. If, in fact, we pursued that right now to find out what the problems are down there and do we have any problems, what kind of a timeframe are we looking at? Four weeks? Five weeks? Seven weeks? What?

Mr. MacKenzie answered probably on the order of five to six weeks for the critical items.

Alderman Thibault stated that is what we should be looking at.

Alderman Levasseur stated if I find out ever, today, from this day forward for the rest of my life that there were reasons why we couldn't build a senior center down at Singer Park, and I have worked my butt off to try to get that thing down there, and there were people being told certain things that I haven't been told as to why we shouldn't build it down there because I see resistance. There was an 8-6 vote for that site. I have seen resistance from the City. I see people looking for reasons not to build that down there. If I ever find out from anyone that there have been people around telling people why we shouldn't build that down there and I wasn't included in that loop, then there is going to be hell to pay. I want to know. If you have a plan down there to put something and that is the reason why there is resistance to that I am going to be very upset because I have been fighting like crazy for this and if you have a plan to put some kind of a baseball park or something down there and the reason why you don't want to put it there is because of that and I find out later, I am telling you because I have been working like crazy and I have asked people. I have asked you directly, Mr. MacKenzie, is it okay if we put it there and you said yes. I see resistance, Alderman Cashin, and I don't like it.

Chairman Cashin replied you have made your point and you are out of order. I want to know what the motion on the floor is.

Deputy Clerk Johnson stated first there was a motion that they proceed with the Singer site not to have it consolidated with any other departments. It was to be a freestanding building. That motion was on the floor and then added to that there was a motion to amend that motion to include a 15,000 square foot building only. The amendment has not been voted on so the procedure would be that unless those are withdrawn you would proceed with a vote on the amendment first.

Alderman Gatsas asked can the Clerk tell us about the motion to refer this back to the Committee from the full Board.

Deputy Clerk Johnson stated the full Board took an action to refer back to the Committee it's Committee report. The discussion entailed the fact that there were questions relative to the Singer site and there may be additional sites. There was a lot of discussion about it. Ultimately, the motion was to refer it back to the Committee and to have the Committee discuss the issue of consolidation as well. The report is back here because there no longer in essence is a report. It was referred back. You have two motions right now. You have a motion and a motion to amend that motion.

Alderman Shea asked was there any mention of the cost or anything in that particular motion was there.

Deputy Clerk Johnson answered the motion itself was merely to refer the report back and to discuss consolidation. Those issues were discussed as part of the reasons why people were referring it back to you.

Chairman Cashin called for a vote on the amendment.

Deputy Clerk Johnson stated the amendment is to have a 15,000 square foot building.

Alderman Gatsas asked so we are going to report back for information that shows a 15,000 square foot building at Sears and one at Singer. Is that the proposal?

Deputy Clerk Johnson answered the motion was merely to have a 15,000 square foot building. I guess what we need to do is go back to Alderman Levasseur and ask him if he wants to further clarify what his amendment is. The original motion on the floor was to proceed with the Singer site with no consolidation with City departments. It was to be a freestanding building. Alderman Levasseur requested an amendment to that motion to state that it would be a 15,000 square foot building. That is the amendment. It is the amendment that is being considered at this point in time. Now unless there is another motion to amend that further or to change the verbiage of that, that is what is standing on the floor at this point.

Alderman Levasseur stated the reason I made the motion to amend it to 15,000 square feet is because right now they are considering the 24,000 square foot number and I think that number is too big.

Chairman Cashin asked was it your understanding that this was going to go to Planning to cost it out.

Alderman Levasseur answered yes. That is correct. I want Planning to use the 15,000 number.

Alderman Gatsas asked for both sites.

Alderman Levasseur answered not for both sites, but we can make that a motion also.

Deputy Clerk Johnson stated that is in conflict with the main motion on the floor. Perhaps you want to reconsider what you are trying to vote on.

Chairman Cashin stated my understanding is and correct me if I am wrong, we are talking about a 15,000 square foot building on the Singer Park site to be costed out and returned back to this Board. Is that what the motion is?

Deputy Clerk Johnson replied to be returned back to which Board.

Chairman Cashin responded Lands and Buildings. Do you want it to go to the full Board? That is fine with me.

Deputy Clerk Johnson asked do you want to withdraw all of the motions on the floor and make one clean motion. That would probably be easier for us. What you are saying and what you moved on are two different things. Can we get a withdrawal on the amendment?

Alderman Levasseur withdrew his motion on the amendment.

Alderman Shea withdrew his original motion.

Deputy Clerk Johnson stated the motion now would be that you want a 15,000 square foot building costed out by the Planning Department on the Singer site only as a freestanding facility without consolidation of any City departments.

Alderman Shea moved to recommend that a 15,000 square foot free standing building on the Singer Park site be costed out by the Planning Department with such information to be forwarded to the full Board. Alderman Thibault duly seconded the motion.

Alderman Lopez asked that will come back to the full Board in what timeframe.

Mr. MacKenzie answered I would prefer in this case to get an architect to give us a cost estimate or a cost estimating firm. That would take a little bit longer. Between us and Highway we could come up with a ballpark number, but given the

issues that the Board has I would prefer to get a more solid number. That could be anywhere from three to four weeks would be my guess.

Alderman Shea asked would that be ready by the first or second meeting in March.

Mr. MacKenzie answered I would say probably the second meeting in March.

Chairman Cashin called for a vote on the motion. Chairman Cashin requested a roll call. Aldermen Gatsas, Levasseur, Shea and Thibault voted yea. The motion carried.

Alderman Gatsas moved to have the Planning Department cost out the acquisition of the Sears building along with a 15,000 square foot freestanding building on that site. Alderman Levasseur duly seconded the motion.

Chairman Cashin called for a vote on the motion. Chairman Cashin requested a roll call. Aldermen Gatsas voted yea. Alderman Levasseur abstained. Aldermen Shea and Thibault voted nay. The motion failed.

Alderman Gatsas stated I have a lot of respect for my colleagues, but that is not the reason why it came back to this Committee. That is absolutely not the reason why the full Board sent it to this Committee – to play a game. That is exactly what just happened and I am very upset by it and I am offended by it. That is a political football you just played and it is not right. I would never have done it to any of you sitting on this Committee.

Alderman Shea replied I resent what he is saying. It is not a political football. I have always been opposed to the Sears building. I have always been opposed to the seniors being there and I know that we have to settle this issue and if Dan O'Neil is right we have to be creative about our thinking and we have to say that the most creative thing we can do is to give the seniors what they want. Three hundred and twenty-one people said they want the Singer Park site. I wasn't initially for that. I was for Derryfield Park but I reconciled my views. That is what they want and if you people want the Riverwalk to be in existence, you have to put people down there.

Chairman Cashin stated I am not taking sides one way or another but I believe that Alderman Gatsas should have been given the same right to have his property appraised just as you people have done and I really think you have done him an injustice. I really do.

Alderman Levasseur stated I voted to abstain, but I am going to vote yes. I really believe that this Board is 7-7 right now. I really believe that if we brought this to

the full Board 7 people are going to want us to do two things – get us a price of a 15,000 square foot building on both sites. Now, whether I am making a mistake here or not, Alderman Gatsas was kind enough to say yes to our motion for the 15,000 square feet at Singer Park. Now I am trying to be fair to everybody on this issue and the issue really is...I will never vote for the Sears building anyway but if you are going to do a cost analysis, you might as well compare apples to apples and I think that is the reason we referred this back to the Committee. If you are going to compare an 18,000 square foot building to a 24,000 square foot building, I think it is only fair that you compare both sites at 15,000 square feet each. I seconded the motion and it is really unfair of me not to vote. Out of respect for my colleague and out of respect for the process, I think it is only fair that since this Board was 7-7 on this issue that we should have an analysis of both but at the price of the building at 15,000 square feet, which was my original intent with the motion anyway. I strongly agree with Alderman Shea. I will fight to the end for Singer Park. I think we are wasting our time looking at the building on Elm Street and I think the compromise solution to put the senior center at Singer Park and buying the Sears building for consolidation is a good idea for all of us and that, Mr. O'Neil, is being creative.

Deputy Clerk Johnson stated we would need a new motion for 15,000 square feet because the original motion was for 16,000 square feet.

Alderman Gatsas replied I said 15,000 square feet. I will correct the motion. It was for 15,000 square feet. Let me clarify the motion so that when you do your numbers you come back with a free standing building cost at the Sears site by itself and also the consolidation price for renovating the Sears building for consolidation by itself so that we can meld the two together or separate them if we want to do just consolidation and still have the ability if for some reason you do borings and a senior center can't be built there than obviously the opportunity to come back and build it at the Sears building would be appropriate to do.

Alderman Vaillancourt asked is this coming before the full Board one way or the other tonight.

Deputy Clerk Johnson answered no. There is no report going to the Board this evening.

Alderman Levasseur stated we could. We did it the last time.

Deputy Clerk Johnson replied we anticipated it the last time because the Board requested that and we put an item on the agenda to that effect. Alderman Gatsas has made a motion and I don't have a recorded second. Was it Alderman Levasseur's intent to second that motion?

Alderman Levasseur responded yes.

Alderman Gatsas moved to have the Planning Department cost out the acquisition of the Sears building along with a 15,000 square foot freestanding building on that site. Alderman Levasseur duly seconded the motion.

Chairman Cashin called for a vote on the motion. The motion carried with Aldermen Shea and Thibault duly recorded in opposition.

Chairman Cashin stated I want to go on notice that I am bringing in a minority report on the Teamster's Hall on Maple Street.

TABLED ITEMS

7. Communication from John Marchwicz requesting to purchase a parcel of land known as Map 218, Lot 21 located on Crescent Lane.
(Tabled 9/18/00 pending reports from Planning and Tax.)

This item remained on the table.

9. Communication from Sheila M. Grace requesting to purchase property located on River Road known as Map 222/Lot 79.
(Tabled 9/18/00 pending reports from Planning and Tax.)

This item remained on the table.

10. Communication from Ronald and Kathleen Gosselin requesting to purchase property known as Map 750/Lot 11 located on Pond Drive.
(Tabled 4/4/00 pending reports from Assessors and Tax.)

This item remained on the table.

11. Communication from Jay Taylor advising of antenna lease fees received relating to the Hackett Hill property and requesting the Board establish a special non-lapsing account dedicated to help offset future expenses required as a result of the development of the proposed business park.
(Tabled 9/18/00 pending report from Mr. Taylor within 90 days.)

Deputy Clerk Johnson stated there was a handout on this item. I don't know if you want to remove that item from the table. Mr. Taylor is here to address this.

On motion of Alderman Shea, duly seconded by Alderman Thibault, it was voted to remove this item from the table.

Mr. Taylor stated back at the September meeting Alderman Gatsas asked if I would do a little research on communications antennas to see what we could come up with and I assume he was looking at a potential revenue stream for the City if there is a demand for this sort of thing. What I did was I obtained a list of the communications tower companies that operate in the State and I also attached a list of locations of these towers within the City of Manchester and I have a map here that shows those locations. These are all put out by the NH Office of State Planning, who have been designated as the official depository of this kind of information I am told. Not having been familiar with these kinds of negotiations, I talked to a local real estate broker who has done some 30 of these power leases just to get a sense of what the market is and what it might be going forward. What I was told by this gentlemen, Bill Norton by the way if any of you know him, is that in a market like Manchester, which tends to be more on the mature side and what I mean by that is many of the communications companies have now obtained sufficient sites in Manchester to serve the market and may not be terribly anxious to do additional locations. The market and also the lease amounts tend to be lower now going forward than they might have been three to four to five years ago. That is the information I heard. So, the upshot of my suggestion is now that we have this list it might not be a bad idea to ask the departments who own land where these locations might be possible to do some sort of an RFP process to see what if any demand there is and once we get a sense as to whether there is demand then the question is whether you want to proceed with that or not. I think it would be up to this Committee or the Board to direct the departments to do this if that is the desire and I would be happy to work with the departments in question to move this forward if that is what you want to do.

Chairman Cashin asked are you asking for permission to send out an RFP.

Mr. Taylor answered I am suggesting that is the only way I can think of to get a handle on whether there is, in fact, a market or not.

Alderman Gatsas stated just so the Committee knows where I was coming from, I was hoping that we could find a revenue source that we could earmark to do some rehabilitation to the schools that would be a dedicated fund strictly for schools. That is why I asked Jay to go out and do this. If there is an amount of \$40,000 or \$50,000 that comes in as a revenue source that we can say this will bond X amount of dollars on a yearly basis and do some fixing up of the facilities...that is what the original intent was. If it is an RFP that we need, I don't have a problem.

Alderman Thibault asked, Jay, in this analysis I would hope that you would also consider the environmental impact of these towers. As you travel through the State or any state for that matter, you see where some of these towers are and I wonder how many environmental people are involved in this and what they think of it? To me, there are some areas where you see so many of these things they are like trees.

Mr. Taylor answered you are right.

Alderman Thibault stated I am worried about that. Do we have any kind of regulation to regulate that to some extent?

Mr. Taylor replied part of my recommendation here was that whatever we decide to do the Planning Department and the Building Department be consulted. Once we decide what locations we may want to offer, these sites will at least preliminarily be checked out through the Planning and Building Department to make sure that they are appropriate for City regulations and zoning. Obviously, we don't want to be promoting sites that are going to run into a buzz saw in the regulatory process. It may turn out that there are no appropriate sites. I don't know the answer to the question but the only way to find out is to run it through the process.

On motion of Alderman Gatsas, duly seconded by Alderman Shea, it was voted to give permission to Jay Taylor to go out for an RFP for antenna leases.

There being no further business, on motion of Alderman Levasseur, duly seconded by Alderman Shea, it was voted to adjourn.

A True Record. Attest.

Clerk of Committee